



Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

The Greensboro Urban Area is at a turning point in its history. Economic restructuring, significant growth of employment and households, and major infrastructure projects like the Greensboro Urban Loop and the J. Douglas Galyon Depot are all indicators and drivers of change. Planning today is necessary to meet the community and facility needs of tomorrow. Comprehensive Planning and Long Range Transportation Planning are important tools in this regard. Planning for the bicycle, pedestrian, and greenways need is an especially important part of this broader planning effort. Offering transportation choices, improving transportation safety, enhancing community health and wellness and a range of other community goals all depend on this effort. The area can move from a system of facilities focused on automobiles to an integrated, safe, and convenient multi-modal transportation system.

The work of the Greensboro Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and the City of Greensboro to develop a Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Plan reflects this vision. Private and community groups have played a key role. The generous funding support of the Moses-Cone Wesley Long Community Health Foundation through Action Greensboro has enabled the greenways and health portions of the plan to proceed.

The Greensboro Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (Greensboro MPO) completed a 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Urban Area in 2004. The LRTP details transportation improvements recommended in the Greensboro Urban Area through year 2030. The LRTP addresses surface transportation needs, including bicycle and

pedestrian modes, and identifies when Federal, State, and Local funds are expected to implement the projects contained within. The LRTP recommends a balanced transportation system as key to meeting the area's future needs. It identifies the need for the more detailed bicycle, pedestrian, and greenways planning undertaken in this effort. The next LRTP update (expected by 2008) will incorporate the recommendations of this plan.



Figure 1(a). The Bicentennial Greenway provides an excellent and lengthy off-road corridor.

While the plan covers the entire Greensboro Urban Area, the following excerpts from the City of Greensboro Comprehensive Plan, Connections 2025, illustrate the spirit of this Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Master Plan:

- A balance among different modes of travel, including interconnected pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities and routes in addition to roadways



- Integrated development patterns and transportation networks that work together to support objectives such as mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly communities and use of alternative travel modes
- The equitable distribution of transportation facilities and choices throughout the community, including attention to areas with less well-developed infrastructure and to connecting workers to employment centers

Action Greensboro is a non-profit organization that was created in response to the McKinsey Report of 2000. The report warned that Greensboro's future would be challenged in terms of economic growth and community development. Action Greensboro was formed to respond to this challenge and is dedicated to creating an economically vibrant community where individuals can find the foundations to build their lives; fostering an environment that attracts business and industry and which stimulates business formation and development; and developing a dynamic urban center.

Together, the Greensboro MPO, City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation, and Action Greensboro have formed a partnership in support of the preparation of this Comprehensive Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenway Plan. In January 2005, Action Greensboro and the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation commissioned Greenways Incorporated, a nationally known firm that specializes in open space and greenway planning, to prepare the health and wellness and greenway elements of this plan. In July 2005, the City of Greensboro Department of Transportation (the lead planning agency for the Greensboro MPO) commissioned Greenways Incorporated and Toole Design Group, a nationally known firm that specializes in bicycle and pedestrian planning, to complete the bicycle and pedestrian transportation elements of this plan.

1.2 Purpose of this Plan

This Plan represents the first time in the history of the Greensboro area that a comprehensive evaluation and program of action has been prepared to address the immediate and long-term needs for bicycle, pedestrian and greenway facilities. There are several primary purposes for this plan. One has been to define an important connection between public health and the diminishing access to outdoor landscapes, and how a community wide bicycle, pedestrian and greenways plan can serve to improve the health and wellness of area residents. Another has been to define immediate and long-term goals for the bicycle, pedestrian, and greenways system of the future. The third has been to propose an interconnected system of greenways, on-road bicycle facilities and sidewalks, that when linked together, will enhance transportation safety, broaden choices for getting to destinations around the area on foot, bicycle, and public transportation, and form a web of outdoor facilities providing improved access to outdoor resources for transportation and recreation purposes. The fourth is to use the development of



Figure 1(b). Bicyclist along Grandover Parkway.



integrated bicycle, pedestrian, and greenway facilities as a strategy to help the community achieve a range of community goals for land use, enhanced livability, and economic competitiveness.

1.3 Planning Process

The Greenways Incorporated team has worked under the direction of the Greensboro MPO and City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation, and under the review of Action Greensboro, to conduct an open, participatory planning process. Views of community residents have been key to crafting the recommendations of this plan. A variety of techniques have been used to engage citizens and solicit their views, including citizen surveys, public workshops, open house meetings, and focus group meetings. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Department of Public Health Education completed a Trail User and Non-User survey that defines how residents utilize the area's greenway and trail system.

The team worked in cooperation with MPO and the City of Greensboro staff to conduct in-depth analysis and evaluation of current conditions for bicycling and walking. Both on-road and off-road facilities were evaluated. This information, along with the results of public input, was used to craft the routing and individual segments for the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway system. A draft of this system was reviewed by MPO and City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation staff, and was shared with the public at workshops. The bicycle recommendations were initiated by the consultant, and refined in an iterative process with and under the direction of the MPO staff. The City of Greensboro sidewalk recommendations were developed by the Greensboro Department of Transportation (GDOT) staff and incorporated into the plan by the consultants.

This final plan is intended to serve as an action plan that can be used on a daily basis by MPO and Parks and

Recreation staff, various area agencies, and elected decision makers to guide the future development of the system.



Figure 1(c). Pedestrians utilizing great facilities at the corner of Bennett and Market.

1.4 Plan Goals and Objectives

Throughout the planning process, specific goals for the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenway system were articulated, both by community residents and the sponsoring organizations and agencies.

Connectivity – One of the primary goals of this plan is to improve non-motorized facility connections between origins and destinations and between people and the outdoors.

Health and Wellness – A principal concern and goal for this project has been to improve the health and wellness of area residents by improving access to outdoor resources, partly through the provision of facilities that residents will consider safe and inviting.

Safety – Pedestrian and bicycle activity should become safer and more convenient throughout the Greensboro



Urban Area.

Alternative Transportation – This plan is specifically structured to increase transportation choices through improved bicycling and pedestrian facilities, connecting area residents through quality routes of travel to destinations such as workplaces, schools, shopping, and public transportation.

Enhance the Environment – The proposed bicycle, pedestrian and greenway network will serve to improve the ecosystems and environment of the Greensboro Urban Area, specifically helping to reduce dependence on automobile travel and thereby improving air quality, and through the conservation of natural resources.

Economic Development – Improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities will increase livability, boost tourism, and make the area a more attractive place for business and industry.

Growth Management – The proposed bicycle, pedestrian, and greenway network can be used to guide future growth and development and complement land use planning strategies such as higher density mixed-use development.

1.5 Plan Components

This Plan document includes the following major components:

- An **Executive Summary** over-viewing the findings and recommendations of the plan;
- This **Introduction** that presents the mission, goals, planning process and guiding principles of the plan (Chapter 1);
- An assessment of **Existing Conditions** that overviews growth trends, resources, current bicycle,

pedestrian, and greenway facilities, and planning opportunities and constraints (Chapter 2);

- A **Needs Assessment** for bicycle, pedestrian and greenway facilities that considers the level of service needed to meet current and future populations and the results of survey work that indicates area desires (Chapter 3);

- A recommended **Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenway System** that puts forward a framework of recommended facilities (Chapter 4);

- **Program** Recommendations for Education, Encouragement and Enforcement and **Policy** Review and Recommendations (Chapter 5);

- An **Operations and Management** program that defines strategies for maintaining the bicycle, pedestrian, and greenway network (Chapter 6);

- **Implementation** recommendations that outline specific steps for achieving the plan's key elements over the next 25 years (Chapter 7);

- **Appendices** that provide a public involvement summary, a summary of public surveys, design guidelines for facility development, a funding source inventory, the Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) model description, and information about the City of Greensboro Sidewalk Construction Program.